

A N
ENQUIRY

I N T O

The GROUNDS and REASONS, or
what those principles are, on which
two of our anniversary solemnities
are founded :

V I Z.

That on the 30th of *January*, being the
day of the martyrdom of King *Charles* the
First, appointed to be kept as a day of fasting ;

A N D

That on the 5th of *November*, being the day of
our deliverance from Popery and slavery, by the happy ar-
rival of his late Majesty King *William* the Third, appoint-
ed to be kept as a day of publick thanksgiving.

ENJOY

A N
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I N T O

The grounds and reasons, or what those principles are, upon which two of our anniversary solemnities are founded, viz. that on Jan. 30. and that on Nov. 5.

BY way of introduction to the following reflections, I shall transcribe a paragraph or two of the Reverend Dr. Croxall's Sermon, preached on the 30th of *January*, 1729, before the honourable house of Commons.

“ Among the several anniversaries, by
“ our wise legislators appointed to be observed, and for the celebration of which,
“ proper offices of divine service have been
“ compiled by the pastors of our church,
“ there are two of more special note ;
“ which, because of the different events
B “ that

“ that occasioned them, seem to be found-
 “ ed on two contradictory and incompa-
 “ tible principles: but, upon a cool and
 “ impartial deliberation, may be observed
 “ so mutually to correspond with, and il-
 “ lustrate each other, as to make it appear,
 “ in a manner, necessary, that neither of
 “ those doctrines which they separately
 “ suggest, should ever be recommended, in
 “ solemn discourses to the publick, but con-
 “ junctly and at the same time.

“ The one is, that we are now assembled
 “ to keep, a day of fasting; *to implore the*
 “ *mercy of God, that neither that sacred and*
 “ *innocent blood, as on this day shed, nor those*
 “ *other sins by which God was provoked to*
 “ *deliver up both us and our King into the*
 “ *hands of cruel and unreasonable men, may*
 “ *at any time hereafter be visited upon us or*
 “ *our posterity.* The other, a day of thank-
 “ giving for the deliverance of our church
 “ and nation from popery and slavery, by the
 “ happy arrival of his late Majesty King
 “ William the third. Both which, when
 “ rightly understood, and duly apply'd,
 “ plainly shew themselves to have been
 “ no less originally ordained, than annual-
 “ ly continued, upon wise and good grounds;
 “ being equally and jointly conducive to
 “ regulate our political behaviour, by put-
 “ ting us in mind what we owe our King,
 “ and what our country.”

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In these paragraphs, Dr. *Croxall* has observ'd, that the two anniversaries referred to, by reason of the two *different* events that occasioned them, seem to be founded on two *contradictory* and *incompatible* principles. But then, tho' this *seems* to be the case; yet the Doctor supposes it is not so: by his observing, that they mutually *correspond with*, and *illustrate each other*; which surely cannot be said of two contradictory and incompatible principles. But, tho' the Doctor has observed as above; yet he seems to me, to have left the case as dark and perplexed as he found it. And, this indeed seems to be the case, with respect to most of the sermons which are preached upon those occasions. That is, they do not give a clear and a satisfactory account what those principles are, upon which the two forementioned anniversary solemnities are founded. And therefore, as it seems absolutely necessary to enquire what those *principles* are, in order to form a judgment whether they *agree with*, or are *contradictory to each other*: so, this has induced me, to draw up my thoughts upon it.

As to that on the 5th of November, it being a *day of thanksgiving for the deliverance of our church and nation from popery and slavery, by the happy arrival of his late Majesty King William the third*: the principle upon which this anniversary is found-

ed, (I think) is most evident and apparent, viz. that, the *publick good* ought always to be *preferred* to every thing which may come in competition with it. And, as the end and design of government, is not to give princes an absolute dominion over the liberties and properties, the persons and lives of their people; but only to constitute them *guardians* of the *societies happiness*: so consequently, if a prince should so abuse the trust reposed in him, as to attempt and endeavour to *enslave* and make *miserable* the *people* committed to his care; then, and in such a case, the people ought in reason to *defend* their own *rights* against such attempts, by opposing force with force, and by doing whatever is necessary to guard and secure the common good.

This is that *principle*, upon which the late happy *revolution*, and the *anniversary solemnity* appointed to preserve the memory of it are founded; and upon which alone they can be justified and defended. This principle has since that time been *openly avowed, maintained, and justified* in*, and by, our *British Parliament*. Again,

As to that on the 30th of *January*, it being *the day of the martyrdom of K. Charles I.* appointed to be kept as a *day of fasting*; the principle upon which it is founded,

* See the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel.

may not seem quite so apparent. Before the reformation, several popes had taken upon them to excommunicate christian princes, and to discharge the subjects of such princes, from all subjection and allegiance to them; and this had very bad effects. Upon the reformation, the * protestant divines advanced a doctrine in opposition to this, (and by which they made their court to christian princes), *viz.* That princes are God's vicegerents; and as they derive their authority and power from God; so neither the pope, nor any thing else, can dissolve the obligation the people are under to yield subjection to them. And, that this is the case, with respect to all princes, under all circumstances, whether they rule well, or ill, whether they answer the purposes which government was intended to serve, or whether they act contrary to it.

This doctrine was preached up in King *Charles* the First's time, and carried by some of the clergy to its utmost height. So that, if the prince should so abuse his trust, as to attempt and endeavour to enslave and make miserable the people committed to his care; that then, upon this principle, the people have no redress or remedy; it being utterly unlawful for them to defend

* See the Book of *Homilies*, publish'd in the Reign of King *Edward VI.*

themselves, but must on pain of eternal damnation patiently and quietly bear, whatever their governors please to lay upon them. The people might indeed pray and beseech their governors, and remonstrate to them; but they must not resist them, in any case, nor upon any account whatever. And, as this doctrine was preached by some of the clergy in King *Charles* the First's time; so probably it might have an influence upon that prince; by leading him into, or at least countenancing him in, those acts which he went into, and which alarmed the fears of his subjects, *viz.* his raising a tax of *ship money*, without the consent of the parliament; and his demanding of, and his receiving money from his people by *loans*. Which facts, some have thought to have been as *arbitrary* and *illegal*, and, as contrary to the constitution of this kingdom, as any thing that was done by the late King *James*. And, from hence they have been led to query, whether the people of this nation, were not as *justly* called upon, to be upon their *defence* in the *former*, as in the latter case? Though, whether it were so, or not, is beside the purpose of my present enquiry. This doctrine, was again revived and preached up at the restoration of King *Charles* the Second, and was very much insisted on by the clergy; and which, probably gave coun-

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countenance to that pretence, viz. that the doctrine of *passive-obedience* and *non-resistance*, was the *darling* doctrine of the church of *England*; and which, in all likelihood, proved very *ensnaring* to King *James* the Second. Though, since that time, it has been *justly exploded*, *arraigned* *, and *condemned* in, and by our *British Parliament*.

This being the case, it may perhaps be thought, that the principle I have now under consideration, was the *influencing principle* upon the minds of our legislators, at the restoration, in setting apart the anniversary referred to; and upon the minds of the pastors of our church, in compiling a form of divine service for the celebration thereof. However, this, I think, is evident, that the purpose which this anniversary has been generally made to serve, has been for the clergy to preach up the doctrine of passive-obedience and non-resistance in the most absolute and unlimited sense; and to fright the people into it, by pouring out their bulls, not of excommunication, but of eternal damnation, upon those who resist the prince, under any circumstances, or upon any pretence whatever. And, this, I think, is to cast *black* and *odious colours* upon the opposite principle, viz. that principle upon which our late happy revolution

* See the Trial of Dr *Sacheverell*.

is founded ; and consequently, to *traduce* and *vilify* the *revolution* itself. Numberless are the sermons which have been preached on the occasion, and many of them have been suited (to all appearance at least,) to answer this very purpose: so that, the principle upon which the late happy revolution is founded, has been treated with the utmost contempt; with this view no doubt, to render *it*, and those who *adhere* to it, most *odious* and *vile* in the eyes both of *prince* and *people*. Though, it must be owned, that the doctrine of passive-obedience and non-resistance has been preached and inculcated more sparingly, since the family of the *house* of *Hanover* has been happily settled upon the *British* throne, than heretofore. And, I presume and hope, that *this family* will be *wiser*, than to be taken in that snare, which (in all probability) two of our princes have already fallen by. And, not to *trust* to passive-obedience and non-resistance *principles*, nor yet to passive-obedience and non-resistance *professors*, who can *shift* their principles, or at least act *contrary* to them upon any occasion. This is most evident, in what they did, and the share they bore in the *revolution*, by joining in the *opposition* that was made to King *James* the Second: and therefore, as I said before, I hope, and presume that this family will be wiser than to trust to them, or to
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Concerning the
GROUNDS *and* REASONS,

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What those principles are, on which two of
our anniversary solemnities are founded:

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That on the 30th of *January*, being the
day of the martyrdom of King *Charles* the
First, appointed to be kept as a day of fast-
ing; and that on the 5th of *November*, being
the day of our deliverance from Popery and
slavery, by the happy arrival of his late Maje-
sty King *William* the Third, appointed to be
kept as a day of thanksgiving.

To which is added,

*The Sufficiency of Reason in Matters
of Religion, farther considered.*

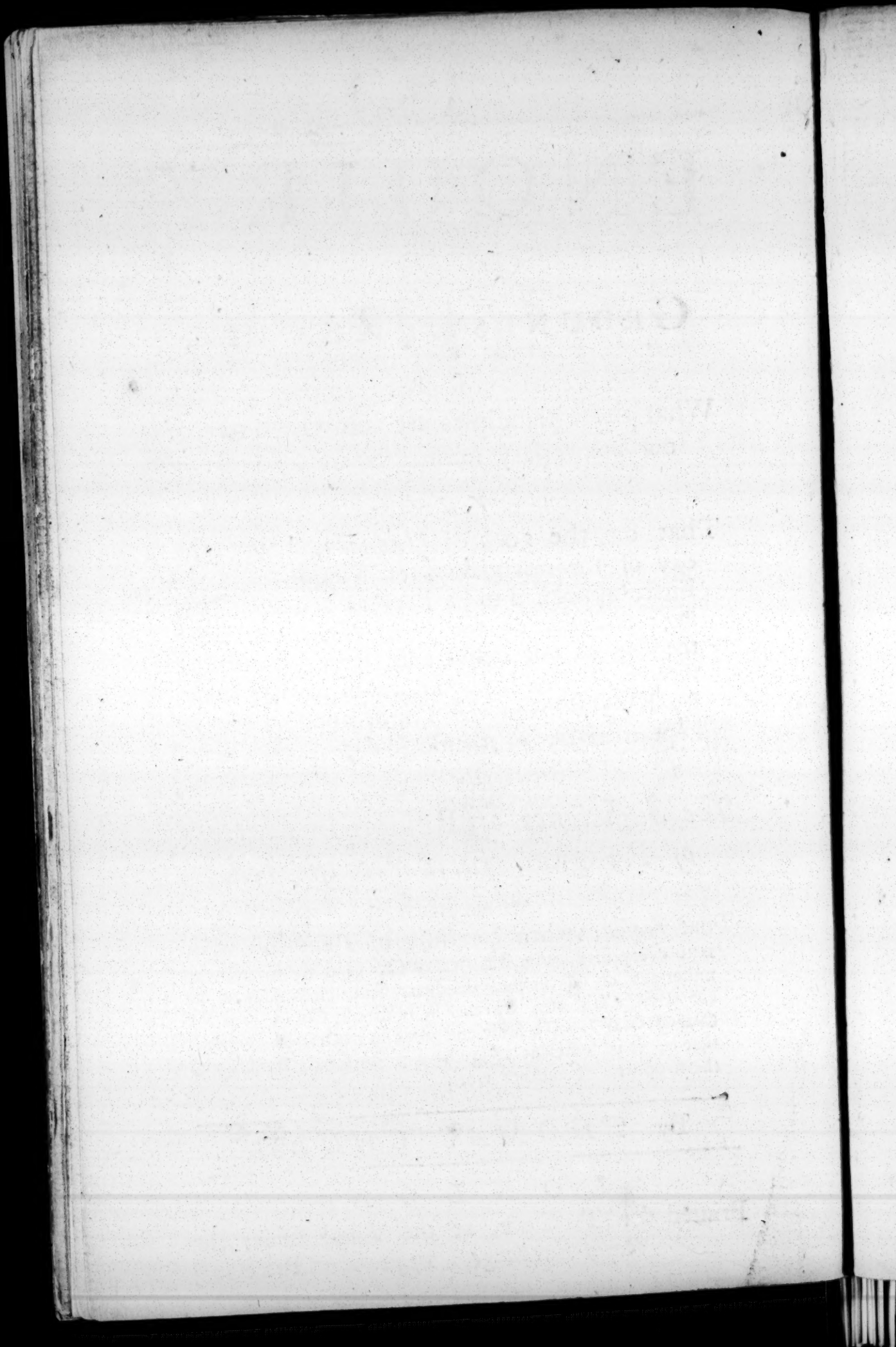
Wherein is shewn,

That *reason*, when carefully used and followed,
is to every man, who is answerable to God for his actions,
under any or all the most disadvantageous circumstances he
can possibly fall into, whether he resides in *China*, or at the
Cape of Good-Hope, a sufficient guide in matters of religion;
that is, it is sufficient to guide him to God's favour, and
the happiness of another world.

By THOMAS CHUBB.

L O N D O N :

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be led away by the sound of words. To this I may add, that the noble stand for *liberty*, which was made by the people of this nation at the late happy revolution, laid the foundation and prepared the way, for advancing this illustrious family from the *dukedom of Brunswick* to the *kingdom of Great Britain*; which was done with this view no doubt, that they might be the *faithful guardians* of our *liberties*. And therefore, if there be any *prudence*, if there be any *gratitude*, if there be any *virtue*, if there be any *praise*; then most undoubtedly, *this family* will think on these things. But to return. Upon the whole of what I have observed on this head, it may be thought to appear, that it is not exceedingly plain and evident what that principle is, upon which the anniversary solemnity of the 30th of *January* is founded.

If it be founded upon *that principle* which I have now been considering, then it is manifest, that the two anniversaries Dr. *Croxall* referred to, are founded upon two *contradictory* and *incompatible* principles; principles, which are as *opposite* and *contrary* to each other as *light* is to *darkness*. And if this be the case, why then do we any longer *halt* between two opinions, and not give up one or the other? If *one*, be the *truth*, and our *duty*; let us wholly adhere to it, and give up the contrary: and, if

the other, be the *truth*, and our *duty*; let us wholly adhere to that, and give up its contrary: this surely, being the *fairer*, the more *ingenuous*, and the more *honest* part. I now argue, upon a supposition that the two anniversaries referred to, are founded upon two *contradictory* and *incompatible* principles. Whereas Dr. Croxall supposes, that this is not the case; and, that upon a cool and impartial deliberation, those principles may be observed mutually to *correspond* with, and *illustrate* each other. Now, if this be the case, then surely, it will be proper to enquire, what those *two agreeing principles* are, or rather, whether there be not *one common principle*, which may be considered as the ground and foundation of them both: and, which alone can in reason justify our governours, in appointing the two anniversaries referred to; the one as a day of *fasting*, and the other as a day of *thanksgiving*; and which anniversaries founded upon this principle, mutually point out the *political behaviour* both of *prince*, and *people*. That there is such a principle I grant; and what it is I come now to shew.

The *publick good* (with respect to this world,) is the *chiefest* and *highest* object of our desires, and of our cares and endeavours to secure, because the good of each individual is contained in it, and bound
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up with it: and consequently, the publick good is itself *most valuable*, and therefore ought in reason to be *preferred* to all other things which may come in competition with it. This being the case, from hence it will follow, *first*, that he who contributes *most* to the happiness and security of the society, does the *greatest* good and is the *greatest* benefactor to it; and therefore is in reason entitled to the *greatest* honours and rewards the society is capable of conferring upon him. And on the other side, it will follow, *secondly*, that he who does the *greatest* injury to and is destructive of the common happiness; such an one does the *greatest* evil, and is therefore guilty of the *highest* and *most heinous* of crimes. And,

As government was not ordained for the sake of *governours*, but for the *security* of the *common happiness*; (that is, government was not instituted for the sake of the honours and advantages which governours may reap from it, considered abstractedly from the common good; but, it was ordained as a *necessary means* to guard and secure the common happiness, and for governours themselves as *sharers* in that happiness, and to secure them in the enjoyment of those greater honours and advantages, which a faithful execution of the *trust* reposed in them, entitles them to:) so, in reason, the *means* ought always to give

place to the *end*. And, therefore, as a good prince in the faithful execution of his office, is an instrument of the greatest good to society, and thereby is entitled to his people's affection and allegiance, and to all those greater honours and advantages, which such a discharge of his trust justly merits: so, on the other side, if the prince *abuses* the trust reposed in him, by attempting and endeavouring to enslave and make miserable the people committed to his care; then, and in such a case, it is the business and duty of the society, to use all proper means to *preserve* and *secure* the common happiness. And, if the case should come to such a desperate issue, as that the *safety* of such a *prince*, and the *safety* of the *society*, come in competition, so as of necessity one of these must give place to the other; then, in reason, the safety of such a prince, ought to give place, to that of the society, as the means ought in reason to give place to the end. And, to suppose, that the safety of such a prince, ought to be prefer'd to the security of the society, is prodigiously unreasonable and absurd: because it supposes, that the means is preferable to, and more valuable than its end; which is a manifest absurdity. And, it is upon this principle, *viz.* that the publick good is always to be prefer'd, (and I think upon this only,) that our governours can in
reason

reason be justified, in appointing the two anniversaries before mentioned. For,

First, when a prince faithfully executes the *trust* reposed in him, by guarding and securing the *characters*, the *properties*, the *liberties*, the *persons* and *lives*, and thereby the *happiness* of his *people*, and makes the common good the *rule* and *measure* of his government; then, and in such a case, the *person* and *life* of the prince are *sacred* and *inviolable*. And, as he is entitled to the highest honours and rewards, which the society can confer upon him, seeing he is an instrument of the greatest good to them: so, all attempts upon the *person* and *life* of such a prince, are *crimes* of the *deepest dye*; because, they are not so much committed against the person and life of the prince, as against the *society*, whose *faithful guardian* he is, and from which, those crimes receive their *highest aggravations*. Whoever therefore, is an enemy to, and opposes *such a prince*, is an enemy to, and opposes the *common good*. And, whoever takes away the life of such a prince, does what in him lies, to destroy the common happiness; which surely, is the greatest of crimes. And,

Such a prince, our publick office of *divine service* appointed for the 30th of *January*, supposes King *Charles the First* to have been. In it, he is called a *blessed martyr*; his cause,
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is considered as a *righteous cause*; and his blood, is called *innocent and righteous blood*. By which surely, nothing less can be intended, than that he was *innocent* of the crimes charged upon him; that the cause he undertook was the *good* of the *publick*; and that he dyed a martyr to *that cause*; and consequently, that he was such a *good* prince, as I have before described. Now, admitting this to be the case; then, and under that consideration, the *person and life* of King *Charles* were *sacred and inviolable*, and all attempts made against him were *crimes* of the *deepest dye*, and consequently, a deluge of horrible sin and wickedness must, at that time, have broken in and overflowed this nation. And as, our publick form of *divine service* supposes this to have been the case: so, this is the only rational ground, for keeping the 30th of *January* as a day of *fasting*; that is, a day for the grave, solemn, and publick remembrance of the wicked and bad actions of our ancestors; which remembrance, when rightly applied, ministers wholesom lessons of counsel and instruction to us. What those lessons are, I shall shew hereafter.

It is not my business to enquire, whether King *Charles* was that good prince, or not, which I have described above: all that is necessary for me to observe is, that our publick form of *divine service* supposes him to have

have been such; and that this supposition is the only *rational ground*, for keeping that anniversary. For, if we view the case in the other light, and suppose King *Charles* to have been guilty of what his accusers at the time of the civil war charged upon him; that is, if he attempted and endeavoured to undermine and destroy *the common good*, by setting up and exercising an *arbitrary* and *despotick power* over the people of this nation; or in other words, if he attempted and endeavoured to *subvert* and make *void* the *laws* and *constitutions* of this kingdom, by which the liberties and properties of the people, and thereby, the common happiness is *secured*, (which some have thought to be the truth of the case, but whether it were so, or not, I think, must be collected from the best and most impartial histories and memoirs, that we have of those times;). I say, if this was the truth of the case, then, the opposition which was made to those attempts, was like that at our late happy revolution, not only justifiable, but *commendable* and *praise-worthy*, as it was absolutely necessary, to the guarding and securing the *common good*, which in reason ought always to be *preferred*. Then, that is, upon the present supposition, the keeping such a day of *fasting* would be very *absurd*; because then, the thing chiefly and principally to be remembered would be, not the misfortunes and sufferings

ferings of the prince, which in this view of the case, he must have brought upon himself, these being the consequences of his bad government, as that introduced and brought upon him, all the troubles, distresses, and sufferings which he afterwards fell into; (tho', on the other side, this may not by any means excuse or justify all that was done against him;) I say, in this view of the case, the thing chiefly and principally to be remembered would be, not the misfortunes and sufferings of the prince, but, the *happy deliverance* of the *people*; which deliverance, the keeping a day of fasting, would be very unsuitable and improper to preserve the memory of. This case would then, be like that of the revolution, with respect to which, we do not remember the misfortunes which *King James* brought upon himself; but only, the *happy deliverance* of our *church* and *nation*, from *popery* and *slavery*; and the *means*, by which that deliverance was brought about. And then, that is, in this view of the case, our publick form of *divine service* would be a *mockery*: because then, *King Charles's* blood would not have been *innocent* blood; his cause would not have been a *righteous* cause; neither would he have *died* a *martyr* for the *good* of *his country*, but the contrary. However, our publick form of *divine service*, supposes this, not to have been the case.

I am sensible it may be here urged, admitting that King *Charles* endeavoured to bring the people of this nation under an *arbitrary* and *despotick power*, and admitting that the people *justly* interposed in the defence of their liberties; yet, seeing the civil war issued in the setting up *such a power* in this nation, tho' exercised by another hand, how then can the interposition of the people be said to work our *deliverance*, when in the event it rather introduced or brought upon us a state of *slavery*?

I answer, that the long contest betwixt the *king* and *people* introduced great changes and disorders in the affairs of this kingdom; and, as some of those who were intrusted with, or who under those distractions got possession of power, wickedly abused that trust, and employed that power to answer *base ends* to themselves, and to *disappoint* the design of those who had been honestly engaged in the defence of our liberties, (which consequences could not be foreseen, and therefore could not be provided against): so the convulsive and oppressive state which this nation fell under, after the civil war, made way for that more *peaceful* and *better government* which succeeded the *restoration*. And, if we admit what is supposed above, *viz.* that King *Charles* endeavoured to bring

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the people of this nation under an *arbitrary* and *despotick* power; if the people had not interposed as they did; then, the consequence would have been, that the nation would have been *enslaved* to our *latest posterity*, without any prospect of a deliverance: I say, this must have been our case, for any grounds we could have had to hope or expect the contrary. So that, in this view of the case, the *liberty* we now enjoy, and which this nation hath enjoyed ever since the restoration, is owing to the above-mentioned interposition of the people; and this I call a *deliverance*. And, as it would be this deliverance, and not the misfortunes of the prince, which we should be chiefly concerned to remember: so surely, a day of *fasting* would be *most unsuitable* and *improper* for that purpose. I now argue upon a supposition, that King *Charles* did endeavour to bring the people of this nation under an arbitrary and despotick power; but whether this was the case or not, is besides the purpose of my present enquiry; and, as I observed above, our publick form of *divine service* supposes this not to have been the case.

Secondly, If the prince who by virtue of his office is the *guardian* of the society's *happiness*, and upon which account alone it is that he has those greater honours
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and rewards conferred upon him, in consideration of the *greater service* and *benefit* he does to the *society*; if he should *betray* his trust, and attempt and endeavour to *enslave* and make *miserable* the people committed to his care; then the reason of the thing requires (because the *publick good* is always to be *preferred*) that the people should make use of all proper means to guard and secure the common happiness. And, such a prince, our publick form of *divine service* appointed for the fifth of *November*, supposes King *James* the Second to have been, and it supposes this to have been *our case* at the late happy revolution. Which supposition, admitting it to be true, justifies the people of this nation in inviting the then Prince of *Orange* over to our rescue; it justifies their joining with that prince when he was come, in order to oppose force with force if the case had required it; (and which afterwards was actually the case in *Ireland*;) and it justifies our governours in appointing the fifth of *November* as a day of *publick thanksgiving*, for the deliverance of our church and nation from *popery* and *slavery*, by the happy arrival of his late Majesty King *William the Third*.

It is not to my purpose to enquire, whether King *James* was that *bad* prince, or not, which I have described above; it being

sufficient to observe, that our publick form of *divine service* supposes him to have been such; and it is that supposition, which in reason justifies our governours in appointing the anniversary solemnity aforesaid. For, if King *James* was a *faithful guardian* of the society's *happiness*, by protecting and defending the *persons* and *characters*, the *liberties* and *properties*, the *lives* and thereby the *happiness* of his *people*; and, if he made the publick good, the *rule* and *measure* of his government: then, and in that case, the *person* and the *life* of King *James* were *sacred* and *inviolable*, and all attempts made against him were *crimes* of the *deepest dye*, &c. But, our publick form of *divine service*, supposes this not to have been the case.

Thus I have shewn, what that *one common principle* is, upon which our governours can in reason be justified in appointing the two anniversaries here referred to, the one as a day of *fasting*, and the other as a day of *thanksgiving*: what remains is for me to shew, how these two anniversary solemnities, founded on this principle, are equally and jointly conducive to regulate the *political behaviour* both of *prince* and *people*. And,

First, I am to shew how these solemnities serve to regulate, or rather to point out the political behaviour of the *prince*. And, here I beg leave to observe, that as
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the *publick good* ought in reason always to be *preferred*, and as it is this *principle* upon which our governours can in reason be justified, in appointing those anniversaries: so this points out to governours how they ought to act, *viz.* to make the *publick good* the principal object of their care, and the *rule* and *measure* of their government. Not only because this is their *bounden duty*, and the very *end* of their *office*; but also, because this is the most effectual *way* and *means* to secure their title to, and their quiet and peaceable enjoyment of those greater honours and rewards, which they have in consideration of such their service to the society. The anniversary for the 5th of *November*, likewise tends to bring to the remembrance of our princes, the unhappy *miscarriage* of the late King *James*; and this, ministers a kind caution to them, to act a *wiser* and a *better part*. These anniversary solemnities, afford a kind monition to princes, to take care above all things to gain, and secure to themselves (if possible,) the *affections* and *good will* of their people. And, in order thereto, to be *prudent* and *frugal* as well in their publick administrations, as in their private affairs; that so, the weight and expence which government unavoidably brings along with it, may be rendered as *light* and *easy* to the people, as it conveniently can be. And, as our governours are
placed

placed over a *generous people*, who are disposed to do whatever is necessary, to make their princes easy and happy in themselves and families, and to appear great and glorious in the sight of the nations round about: so this, (as well as the anniversaries referred to,) should teach and admonish our princes, not to lay any *unnecessary burthens* upon the people, nor any otherways awaken their *fears*, of suffering those very *evils* from their governours, which government was designed to *secure* them from. And, this, I think, was partly the case, in King *Charles* the First's time: the peoples *fears* were *alarmed*, and they thought themselves in *danger* of falling under an arbitrary and despotick power; whether there was any just ground for these apprehensions, is beside my present purpose to enquire. Thus, I have shewn, how those anniversaries (founded on the forementioned principle,) naturally point out the *political behaviour* of the *prince*. Again,

Secondly, I am to shew, how these two anniversaries (founded on that principle,) are mutually conducive to regulate, or rather point out the *political behaviour* of the *people*; as well, when they are happily under the government of a *wise* and *good prince*, who carefully and faithfully discharges the trust reposed in him, to promote and secure the common good; as when they unhappily fall into the hands of a *vicious prince*,
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who wickedly abuses the trust reposed in him, by attempting and endeavouring to undermine and destroy the common happiness. And,

First, The anniversary solemnity on the thirtieth of *January*, points out to us how we ought to behave under the government of a good prince; a prince, who carefully and faithfully executes the trust reposed in him, by employing the *publick treasure* for the *publick good*, and by making and executing such laws, or rather by doing his part towards it, as are proper to *guard* and *secure* the *persons*, the *characters*, the *liberties*, the *properties* and *lives*, and thereby the *happiness* of his people; and who makes the *common good* the rule and measure of his government. And, *such* a prince, our publick form of *divine service* appointed for the thirtieth of *January*, supposes King *Charles* the First to have been. I say, that this day's solemnity points out to us our political behaviour, or how we ought to act when under the happy government of such a prince. For, as we are led by the service of the day to complain of, and lament the miscarriages and bad behaviour of our fore-fathers: so, this points out to us, not to repent of their sins, for that we cannot do; neither to repent of our own sins with respect to what they did, because in that respect we have not transgressed;
and

and where there is no transgression there needs not, neither can there be, any repentance ; but it calls upon us to take warning by them, not to be *guilty* of their *faults* and *miscarriages*, sô far as they were *justly blamable*, and to be very careful that we act a *wiser* and a *better part*. When therefore, we are under the happy government of a *good* prince, viz. *such* a prince as I have before described, this day's solemnity shews us how we ought to behave towards him. Namely, not only, not to offer any *injury* or *disrespect* to his *person* or *character*, not to *perplex* or *disturb* his *government*, not to create *jealousies*, and thereby introduce *uneasiness* in the minds, and alienate the *affections* of his people from him ; and the like : but, it also calls upon us, to pay all due *allegiance* and *subjection* to him, to *honour* him with the highest honours, and to reward his faithful service for the publick good, with the *highest rewards*. This, is that *political behaviour*, which this day's solemnity points out to us, when we are happily under the government of a *good* prince. And, happy would it be for us, if we could all learn this *wise lesson* of instruction from it ; then, this anniversary solemnity, would not be the unhappy occasion of *fasting* for *strife* and *debate*, and to *smite* with the *fist* of *wickedness*, as it is to be feared it has too often been ; but, it would be the happy occasion

occasion of leading us into the *practice* of that *duty*, upon which the happiness of society does most apparently depend. Again,

Secondly, The anniversary solemnity on the 5th of *November*, points out to us, how we ought to behave under a *vicious* prince, who wickedly abuses the trust reposed in him, by attempting and endeavouring to undermine and destroy the common happiness. For, as the *publick good*, is the principal object of our care, and ought always to be *preferred*, to every thing which may come in competition with it: so, this anniversary, points out to the members of society, how they ought to act, when the common happiness is in *apparent danger*, viz. to *hazard* their *lives* and *fortunes* in the defence of it. This, is plainly pointed out to us, by the *service* and *solemnity* of the *day*; as it brings to our remembrance, and as it were *livelily sets* before our eyes, the *glorious example* of our *fore-fathers* at the late happy *revolution*; by which example, the members of society are taught, (what is indeed their duty, because the publick good ought always to be preferred,) to have a *watchful eye* upon those princes, who *attempt* and *endeavour* to undermine and destroy the common good. They, are likewise taught by it, to be *timely* upon their *guard*, to *check* all *approaches* to arbitrary power, and not to suffer the evil to run to such a height, as to be past redress,

dress, or remedy. In fine, this day's solemnity, calls upon the members of society, to venture their *lives* and *fortunes* in the cause of the common happiness, when it is in danger; and to *hazard* their *all*, to guard and secure the common good. This, is that *political behaviour*, which the solemnity of the day, plainly points out to us, when we unhappily fall into the hands of such a *wicked* prince, as I have before described. And such a prince, our publick form of *divine service* for the 5th of *November*, supposes King *James the Second* to have been. This day's solemnity, *brings* to our *remembrance*, the examples of our fathers, who gloriously interposed at the late happy revolution, when the common good was in imminent danger, and ventured their all in the defence of it. And, this day's solemnity *invites* us, and as it were calls upon us with a loud voice, saying, *Go ye and do likewise in a like case*. And, in such a case, it would not be, to act like *double-minded* and *unstable* men, men who are *given* to *change*; but, it would be, to act *uniformly* and *consistent* with that *principle*, by which our *political behaviour* is *always* to be guided and directed. A principle, which requires subjects, as well to *oppose* a *vicious* prince, in his attempts and endeavours to undermine and destroy the common happiness, as it requires their most firm and constance *adherence* and *subjection*

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to a *good* prince, who is guarding and securing the common good.

Thus, have I briefly shewn, what some of those *useful reflections* are, which these two great anniversary solemnities appointed by our governors, do naturally suggest unto us, when considered as founded on the fore-mentioned principle: and, how they point out the *political behaviour*, both of *prince* and *people*, And, may they never answer any other purpose, nor have any other effect, than, to engage both prince and people, in the faithful discharge of that *duty*, they owe to each other ! And, may his present majesty King *George* the Second, and his *royal issue*, long rule this nation in *righteousness* : and thereby, most effectually guard and secure the *common good* ; and may they thoroughly consider, and well understand, that this is their *greatest security*, and the establishing their thrones, upon the *most firm* and *lasting foundation* !

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T H E
SUFFICIENCY
O F
R E A S O N
I N
MATTERS of RELIGION,
FARTHER CONSIDERED.

Wherein is shewn, that *reason*, when carefully used and followed, is to every man, who is answerable to God for his actions, under any or all the most disadvantageous circumstances he can possibly fall into, whether he resides in *China*, or at the *Cape of Good Hope*, a sufficient guide in matters of religion; that is, it is sufficient to guide him to God's favour, and the happiness of another world.

T H E
SUFFICIENCY
O F
R E A S O N

In Matters of RELIGION, farther
considered.

SOME time past, I published a tract
entitled, *A discourse concerning rea-
son, with regard to religion and di-
vine revelation.* What I have offer-
ed upon the point, has met with great op-
position. Whether, and how far I, or my
opponents are in the right, with respect to
what is advanced in that tract, must be
left to the judgment of our readers. The
sufficiency of reason in matters of religion,
is now controverted; and the question is,
what it is, that reason is sufficient for; or
what is meant, by those who maintain the
suf-

sufficiency of reason; or that reason, is a sufficient guide in matters of religion. And the answer in short is this, *viz.* That reason (where divine revelation is not) when carefully used and followed, is sufficient to guide men to God's favour, and the happiness of another world: in opposition, to that absolute necessity of a divine revelation, which supposes, that it is impossible, or at least that it is exceeding difficult and next to impossible, for a man to obtain God's favour, and the happiness of another world, who has only his reasoning faculty to guide him, and who has not the help of a divine revelation. Whether reason be sufficient to discover a compleat system of morality, or whether it be sufficient to any other purpose, is not the present question: if it be sufficient to guide men to God's favour, and the happiness of another world; then, it answers the most valuable purposes to them; and this is all that I am concerned to make good,

That reason (where divine revelation is not) when carefully used and followed, is sufficient to answer the purposes aforesaid, appears plain and evident to me; and that disposes me to endeavour to make it appear plain and evident to others. And, as I do it with a kind intention, and a regard to truth: so if I should shew great weakness herein, (which I hope I shall not) I presume

sume my reader's goodness will excuse it. The question before me is, whether reason be a sufficient guide in matters of religion; that is, whether reason (where divine revelation is not) when carefully used and followed, is sufficient to guide men to God's favour, and the happiness of another world. In the prosecution of this enquiry, I shall shew what those principles are which I reason from, and likewise free them from the difficulties which may seem to incumber them: and then I shall shew, what are the conclusions, which do naturally and necessarily follow from those principles; from which I presume it will appear, that reason is sufficient to answer the purposes aforesaid. The principles I reason from, are,

First, That there is a natural and essential difference in things. By which I mean, *first*, that there is not a universal *sameness* in nature; but that things and actions are really distinct and different from each other. That is to say, pleasure and pain, two and four, right and wrong, kind and unkind, are not the *same thing*: but those different terms are used to express, and do convey to the mind, ideas which are really distinct and different in nature. Pleasure is not the same thing as pain; two is not the same as four; right is not the same as wrong; kind is not the same as unkind; and the like. Again, when I say there is a natural and

an essential difference in things, I mean, *secondly*, that there is not an universal in difference in nature; but that things and actions are really one better or preferable to another. That is to say, pleasure is in nature (when considered abstractedly from all other considerations) *better* than pain; right is *better* than wrong; kind is *better* than unkind; and the like. And our discerning faculties do as naturally and as evidently perceive the difference betwixt these, with respect to their preferableness one to the other; as those faculties do discern their differing one from another. That is, we do as naturally and as evidently perceive that pleasure is better than pain, as that pleasure is not pain; we do as naturally and evidently perceive that doing right is better or preferable to doing wrong, as we do perceive that right is not the same thing as wrong; that to do right is commendable and worthy of a rational being, and therefore ought in reason to determine his choice in its favour; that to do wrong is disreputable and unworthy of a rational being, and therefore his choice ought always in reason to be determined against it; and the like. And,

Tho', our reasoning faculty is absolutely necessary for the discovering the natural and essential difference in things, or to enable us to perceive it; yet this faculty does not *make or constitute* that difference. Things
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and actions are really distinct from, and one preferable to another in nature, when considered abstractedly from, and independent of any power in us; and our discerning faculty does only enable us to perceive, but does not constitute that difference. So that the difference in things, does not result from, nor depend upon any particular constitution of the mind; but is founded in nature, and therefore will appear the same to all minds in which a capacity of discernment resides, supposing those minds to be differently constituted. Two and four are really distinct and different in nature, and this difference must and will appear the same to every mind, in which a capacity of discernment resides, tho' differently constituted. Thus, again, pleasure is in nature better and preferable to pain, and this difference must and will appear the same to every mind (however constituted,) which is capable of perceiving what pleasure and pain is. The case is the same with respect to right and wrong, kind and unkind, and the like; these are not only different from, but also one preferable to another in nature; and our faculties do not constitute that difference, but only enable us to perceive it. And, as there is not an universal sameness in nature, but a real difference with respect to things and actions themselves; and, as there is not an universal indifference in nature, but a real

difference with respect to the valuableness or preferableness of one thing or action to another, when they are brought into a comparison: so that difference in all simple (tho' it be otherways in complex) cases, is the object of *simple* perception only, and as such those prove themselves; that is, they appear evident to our perceptive faculties, and do not admit of any other kind of proof. If it should be asked, how it can be proved that the double of two is four, that the whole is equal to all its parts, that acting right is different from, or preferable to acting wrong; and the like? The answer would be, that these are *self-evident* propositions; that is, they appear evident to our discerning faculties, and as such they prove themselves, and do not admit of any other kind of proof. Again,

Secondly, as there is a natural and an essential difference in things: so that difference exhibits, if I may so speak, a *reason* or *rule of action* to every moral agent. That is, as doing right is in nature better and therefore preferable to the doing wrong: so this difference will always be a reason (resulting from the nature of the thing) to every moral agent, why he should chuse to do right, and it will be a reason against, or why he should not chuse to do wrong. Again, as pleasure is in nature preferable to pain, the one being a natural good, and the other a
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natural evil: so that difference affords a *reason* to every moral agent, to chuse to taste pleasure himself, and to chuse to communicate pleasure to others; and it likewise affords a *reason* why he should chuse to avoid pain himself, and chuse to avoid communicating pain to others, when these are considered abstractedly from all other considerations. And, as there is a reason founded in nature for the acting right, and a reason against the acting wrong, a reason for the communicating of pleasure, and a reason against the communicating of pain: so to act *agreeably* to reason in doing the former, is what constitutes *moral* good; and to act *against* the reason of the thing in doing the latter, is what constitutes *moral* evil: *moral* good and *evil* in every instance being nothing else, but the acting *agreeably* with, or *contrary* to that *reason* or *rule of action* which is founded in, and results from the natural and essential difference in things: and all *moral obligations* are nothing else, but the *reasons* resulting from that *difference*, why we should chuse to act this way, or that way, rather than their contraries. And, as those reasons for acting one way rather than another, are founded in nature; that is, they result from the natural and essential difference in things; so they become a rule of action which is equally obliging to every moral agent; that is, to every agent capable of discerning that diffe-

difference; and consequently (in this sense of the word *oblige*,) God as he is a *moral agent*, is obliged to govern his actions by this rule. And,

As there is a reason or rule of action, which is equally obliging to every moral agent: so from hence it will follow, that the reasonableness of an action, ought to determine the will of every rational creature to the performance of that action; even tho', there be no other motive to it; and tho', there be a thousand temptations to excite to the contrary. For, whilst (when all things are taken into the case) it is reasonable that an action should be performed, it is impossible that any, even the strongest temptations (how many soever they be,) should make it reasonable to omit that action; because if that were the case, then, under these circumstances, it would not be a reasonable, or at least an indifferent, but an unreasonable action; and as such, it does not come into the present question; except we can suppose an action to be both reasonable and unreasonable or indifferent at the same time, and under the same circumstances, which is a manifest contradiction. So that, to suppose some *other motives* should take place besides the reasonableness of an action, which may be *more* than a *balance* to the many and strong temptations with which a reasonable creature may be surrounded, in
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order to engage his will for the choice of that action, and without which motives, the bare reasonableness of an action would not be more than a balance to those temptations, is exceedingly wrong: because the reasonableness of an action, is in itself when considered abstractedly from all other motives, more than a balance to all temptations; for otherways it would not be a reasonable action. And, when an action appears to be reasonable; that, ought in reason to determine the will of every reasonable creature, for the choice of that action, supposing no other motive intervened to invite him to it, and supposing ten thousand temptations invited him to the contrary. And, it is his not following his reason in opposition to those temptations, which renders him justly *condemnable* to himself, and to every other reasonable being; and consequently to his maker as such. And, here I beg leave to observe to my reader, that the present question is, what *ought* in reason to determine the will of a being endowed with a reasoning faculty, to the performance of a reasonable action; and not, what is in fact sufficient for this purpose. And here I say, that the reasonableness of an action, ought in reason to determine the will of every such being, for the choice of that action: but then, it depends upon the pleasure of each individual, whether it shall

in fact be sufficient for this purpose or not. And, this is the case of all other motives which may be superadded; it depends upon the pleasure of each individual, whether in fact those motives shall be to him the ground and reason of action or not. And therefore we see that, not only the unreasonableness of an action, but all other motives which may be added to it, *viz.* the hopes and fears of this world, and the hopes and fears of the world to come, are not sufficient in fact to restrain some men from unreasonable actions. And,

As the reasonableness of an action, ought to determine the will of every rational being, for the choice of that action, supposing no other motive be superadded, and supposing many temptations invite to the contrary: so upon this, the equity and certainty of a future judgment is founded, and not upon any divine revelation concerning it. For, as there is a natural and an essential difference in things, and a rule of action resulting from that difference, which every moral agent is in reason obliged to govern his actions by; and, as there is planted in man, a capacity or power which enables him to discern that difference, and it is left to his choice, to act either agreeably with, or repugnant to reason, and thereby to be either a benefactor or a plague to the intelligent world: so, from hence arises the equity and
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reasonableness of God's calling such creatures to an account (when they have finished their course in this world) and rewarding the virtuous, and punishing the vicious parts of our species, according as they have rendered themselves the futable and proper objects of either. I say, the equity and reasonableness of such a procedure, results from the natural and the essential difference in things, and not from any divine declaration concerning it: because it must and will be the same in this respect, whether God had made any declaration that he will judge and deal thus with mankind or not. And tho', the *divine promises* and *threatnings*, are secondary and farther motives to a moral agent, to perform a reasonable action, as his future interest is concerned in the case; yet the reasonableness and equity of a future judgment, and of that rule of action by which we shall be judged, does not result from nor depend upon those promises and threatnings, but from the natural and essential difference in things; and therefore, are and must be the same, whether God had given any promises and threatnings or not. The rule of action which moral agents are to govern their behaviour by, is founded in reason, and as such, it ought to be made the measure of our actions, whether God had given any threatnings or promises concerning

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cerning it or not; and God's judging us, and rewarding or punishing us agreeably to this rule, would have been the same, whether he had made any declaration concerning it or not. God does not judge the world, because he has declared that he will do it; but because it is reasonable that he should: and therefore, his declaration cannot be a ground of certainty in the present case. If it should be asked, how we could be certain that God would judge the world, if he had not declared that he would do it? Then, it may be asked, how we can be certain that God will judge the world, tho' he has declared that he will do it? God's declaration alone is not a ground of certainty, because he may deceive us; and therefore, there must be something in nature to be a foundation for credit with respect to that declaration: and that which is a foundation for credit to that declaration, is a proper ground of certainty, supposing no such declaration had been made. That is, if we give credit to such a divine declaration, because we are sure that God always acts agreeably to reason, and therefore will not deceive us in the present case: then we are sure that God will judge the world, tho' he had made no declaration concerning it, because it is agreeable to reason that he should do so. And,

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Here I beg my reader to consider that a future judgment is not a trifling affair, it being of the last importance to all those who are to pass that tryal; and therefore it cannot be a matter of indifferency to God, whether he will judge the world or not. So that a future judgment and retribution, is either a reasonable or an unreasonable action; that is, there is a reason resulting from the nature of things, either for or against such a judgment. If the reason of the thing requires such a procedure, then this assures us that God will judge the world: and this assurance, is prior to any assurance which is grounded upon a divine declaration concerning this matter, because the credibility of all divine declarations is founded upon this very principle, *viz.* that God will act agreeably to reason, in all his dealings with his creatures. And therefore, as the moon derives or borrows all her light from the sun; so all the certainty which arises from divine revelation in the present case, is derived or borrowed from the principles of reason. If it should be asked, how can reason assure us of a future judgment, when it cannot assure us of our future existence? I answer, that the certainty of our future existence, and a future judgment, are both founded upon the same principle; *viz.* the fitness and reasonableness of God's continuing the one, and executing the other. If

it is fit and reasonable that God should continue our beings, and that he should call us to an account for our actions; then this assures us of our future existence, and of a future judgment; and all the certainty which divine revelation can give us with respect to these points, is derived from, and founded upon this very principle, as I have already observed. And therefore, if it were a matter of indifferency to God, whether he would continue our beings, or whether he would judge the world or not; then it would be as much a matter of indifferency to him, (supposing he has declared that he will do both) whether he should abide by such his declarations, and whether he should deceive us or not, in either of those cases. The reason of things, and the importance of the affair, is as much concerned in the former as in the latter; and therefore, if the former is a matter of indifferency to God, then the latter must be so likewise; and consequently, if reason cannot assure us nor give us satisfaction in these points, then much less can we have it from divine revelation. And, this is what I would humbly recommend to the consideration of all those, who have made themselves parties in the present question.

If it should be urged (as I have been told that this or something like it, has been urged by some writer against me), *viz.* that

that tho', when things are constituted as they are, our moral obligations will naturally and necessarily arise out of them: yet, seeing God is the author of nature, and seeing he might have constituted things otherwise than they are if he pleased; from hence it will follow, that as his will is the ground and foundation of the present constitution of things; so his will must likewise be the ground and foundation of all obligations which naturally and necessarily result from it.

I answer, this at first sight may have the appearance of argument; but when examined it appears to be otherwise. And to shew this, I will give an instance of another kind. The three angles of a right-lined triangle, bear such a relation to each other, as that in every instance, the three angles of a right-lined triangle are equal to two right angles. Now the question arising from hence is, whether this relation naturally and necessarily arises from the things themselves, or whether it results from the will and determination of him who first made and constituted a right-lined triangle. And the answer is most evident, *viz.* that this relation naturally and necessarily arises from the things themselves; because the case is, and must, and will be the same, whether he who first made such a triangle, willed or determined any thing
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concerning it or not. The three angles of a right-lined triangle, always were, and always will be, equal to two right angles: whether ever any such thing as a triangular figure existed or not; it not being within the power, and therefore it cannot depend upon the divine will, to make it so, or to make it otherwise. The case is the same with respect to morality. An innocent indigent moral agent in distress, always was, and always will be, the proper object of pity and relief, whether ever any such being existed or not; and it is not within the power, and therefore it cannot depend upon the divine will, to make it so, or to make it otherwise. And tho', it depends upon the will of God, whether indigent moral agents shall exist, under this or that or the other circumstances; yet, when they do exist under those circumstances, then it does not depend upon his will, whether the moral obligations which do naturally and necessarily result therefrom, shall take place or not, because the case is, and must, and will be the same, with respect to those obligations, whether God willed or determined any thing concerning them or not. From what I have observed, I think it appears, that pleasure and pain, or happiness and misery, that right and wrong, and the like, and the preferableness of these one to another; or in other words, that the natural

tural and moral difference in things, and all moral obligations resulting from that difference, are founded in nature, and are what they are antecedent to, and independent of the divine will, or any divine determinations concerning them. Again,

Thirdly, As there is a natural and an essential difference in things, and as there is a reason or rule of action resulting from that difference, which is equally obliging to every moral agent; so Almighty God makes that rule, *viz.* the reason of things, the measure of his actions; and this he does, in all instances and cases in which it is capable of being a rule to him. And, it is his chusing to act agreeably to this rule, which constitutes his moral character, and denominates him to be a wise, a just, and a good being. And, it is his acting at all times, and in all cases, uniformly and universally agreeably to the reason of things, which constitutes his moral perfections; that is, which denominates him to be a perfectly wise, a perfectly just, and a perfectly good being. And, that this is a true principle, and a proper foundation for argument, I prove thus. Almighty God is present to, and in, and with all things; and thereby, has the most perfect knowledge of them. And, as he most clearly discerns the natural and essential difference in things, and the reason or rule of action resulting from it,
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in every case; and as this is, and ought to be as much a rule of action to God, as to any other moral agent; and as he is far above and thereby is perfectly free from all temptations, which might mislead him and draw him into a wrong choice; so this affords a moral certainty, that he will always chuse to act right, or agreeably to that rule of action which is founded in the reason of things, as aforesaid. For tho', we have different, and sometimes opposite interests in view, and are surrounded with many temptations of various kinds, which invite us to a wrong choice, and which too often is the ground and reason of our foolishly and wickedly acting contrary to that rule of action, which is founded in the reason of things: yet, this is by no means the case with respect to God; and therefore, it cannot be a ground or reason to him, to chuse to act wrong in any case whatever. God has not different and opposite interests in view, he has no wrong affections within to mislead, no temptations from without to entice and allure him, no pleasing prospect to invite, nor any superiour power to threaten and awe him: in fine, nature does not afford a motive to invite him to a wrong choice; and therefore, we are sure that he never will act so; but on the contrary, he always will make the reason of things, the rule and measure of his actions. Thus, I think, I have

have shewn, that the principle I have now under consideration, is a true principle: and thereby, it is a just and proper foundation for argument.

These are the principles I reason from, which if they are not well-grounded, (as I think I have shewn they are;) then I acknowledge, that all I have offered on the subject is of no weight. That is, if there be no real difference in things, but all things and actions are alike indifferent in nature, are neither good nor evil, till they are made and constituted to be either of these, by the arbitrary will and determination of some agent; or if there be not a reason or rule of action resulting from that difference, which ought in reason to determine the will of every being endowed with a capacity of discerning that difference, either for or against the performance of this or that action; or if Almighty God approves or disapproves, not from any natural and intrinsic approvableness, or disapprovableness in the objects themselves, but from capricious humour and arbitrary pleasure; or if he arbitrarily constitutes what shall be right or wrong, good or evil, without any regard to what is so in it self: then, all my reasoning upon the point, is to be set aside; because, it is founded upon the opposite principles.

But here, I must beg leave to make a digression, by observing, that if this were

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the case, then the most absolute scepticism in matters of religion would unavoidably follow upon it: because then, we could not come to any certainty in any point with respect to it. For in such a case there would be no principle in nature to reason from; and consequently, there could not be any foundation for argument. God having no principle to act from, nor any rule to govern his actions by, but what he arbitrarily adopted to himself, and which he might at any time as arbitrarily discard: he would act either fairly or foully, uprightly or deceitfully with his creatures, at any time, or in any instance as he pleased; and consequently, he could not be the proper object of our confidence, in any case whatever. Then *Abraham's* question, and what preceded it, *Genesis* xviii. 25. *That be far from thee, to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, or that the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* this question would be exceedingly vain and trifling, because whatever God does must be right, (upon the present supposition,) if he pleases to determine that it shall be so. Whether God *destroys* the righteous with the wicked, or whether he *destroys* the righteous *only*, or the wicked *only*, and spares either of these from that destruction; whether he deals fairly and equally, or unequally and deceit-

deceitfully with his creatures, all is right that God does; because upon this supposition, it is his determination alone which constitutes right and wrong, good and evil in every case; and because there is no real difference in things, nor any principle in nature to make it otherwise. And then, *St. Paul* also must have been very much mistaken, when he declared, that the *oath* and *promise of God* were two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, Heb. vi. 18. Here I beg leave to ask, wherein lies this impossibility, upon the present supposition. For, if there is no real difference in things, and if swearing at one time, and for-swearing at another; if promising at one time, and falsifying that promise at another, be alike indifferent in nature; then what should hinder or restrain God, from swearing and for-swearing, from promising and falsifying his promise as often, and in what cases soever he pleases? nothing surely. And therefore, *St. Paul* must have been very much mistaken in this point. And,

This is what I would humbly recommend to the consideration of some of the learned doctors and writers of the age; who under the shew and appearance of defending divine revelation, and revealed religion, are laying the ax to the root of all religion, by denying the natural and the essential dif-

ference in things, which most certainly is the ground and foundation of all religion; and by founding all moral obligations, on the arbitrary will and determination of God. Which if it were the case, then we could not possibly come to any certainty what his will is, or what his determinations are with respect to us, in any case whatever; because, as I have observed above, we have no principle to reason from, and consequently, have no foundation for argument in the present case. Besides, if we could come to a certainty what the divine will is in any instance, this is not to be trusted to, nor relied upon, seeing God may shift and change his determinations at pleasure, and we know nothing of it, there not being any principle in nature, which can dispose him to acquaint us with it: so that upon this supposition, religion must be the most uncertain and precarious thing in the world. But to return.

I have shewn above what those principles are which I reason from, *viz.* *first*, that there is a natural and an essential difference in things; *secondly*, that this difference exhibits a reason or rule of action, which is equally obliging to every moral agent; *thirdly*, that Almighty God makes this rule, *viz.* the reason of things, the measure of his actions in his dealings with his creatures, in all instances and cases in which

which it can be a rule to him. Now, admitting those principles are well-grounded, then I argue thus.

First, If there be a natural and essential difference in things, and if that difference exhibits a rule of action to all moral agents, and if God will govern his actions by this rule: then, God will deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances he is in, and the advantages or disadvantages he is under; and then, God will most certainly approve and accept of every such creature, who exercises his reasoning faculty as well, or to answer the best purposes that he can, or that may reasonably be expected from him in his circumstances, and who directs and governs his affections and actions accordingly.

But, there is a natural and an essential difference in things, and that difference exhibits a reason or rule of action, &c.

Therefore, God will deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances he is in, &c.

The major proposition in this argument, is proved above: the minor is proved thus. To deal with all accountable creatures, according to the abilities they have, the circumstances they are in, and the advantages or disadvantages they are under, and to approve and accept of such of them, who

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exercise their reasoning faculties as well, or to answer the best purposes they can, or that may reasonably be expected from them in their circumstances, and who direct and govern their affections and actions accordingly, is to act fairly and equally by such creatures; and to deal otherwise, is to act unfairly and unequally by them. And, as the acting fairly and equally in the present case, is in the nature of the thing better, and therefore preferable to the acting unfairly and unequally: so this difference, exhibits a reason to every moral agent, and therefore, it must be a reason to God, to do the former; and it likewise exhibits a reason to every moral agent, and therefore, to God, against doing the latter. The major and minor propositions being proved, the conclusion naturally and necessarily follows; *viz.* that God will most certainly deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances he is in, and the advantages or disadvantages he is under; and that he will approve and accept of every such creature, who exercises his reasoning faculty as well, or to answer the best purposes that he can, or that may reasonably be expected from him in his circumstances, and who directs and governs his affections and actions accordingly. Again, I argue,

Secondly,

Secondly, if God will deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances he is in, and the advantages or disadvantages he is under; and if God will approve and accept of every such creature, who exercises his reasoning faculty as well, or to answer the best purposes that he can, or that may reasonably be expected from him in his circumstances, and who directs and governs his affection and actions accordingly: then reason is, and must, and will be to every man, if he be not wanting to himself, to every individual of our species, who is answerable to God for his actions, under any or all the most disadvantageous circumstances he can possibly fall into, whether he resides in *China* or at the *Cape of Good Hope*, a sufficient guide in matters of religion.

But, God will deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances he is in, &c.

Therefore, reason is to every man, who is not wanting to himself, &c.

The major proposition in this argument is proved above: the minor I prove thus. It is in the power, and it is left to the election or choice of every individual of our species (who is answerable to God for his actions) to exercise his reasoning faculty as well, or to answer the best purposes that he can, or that may reasonably be expected from

from him in his circumstances. I say, that this must be the case of every individual of our species, wherever he resides, or whatever disadvantageous circumstances he may be under; because, this is no more than doing what he can do, which surely must be in every man's power to do, and to suppose the contrary, that is, to suppose that any man in any circumstances cannot do what he can do, is a manifest contradiction. Again, it is in the power, and it is left to the choice of every individual of our species, who is answerable to God for his actions, to direct and govern his affections and actions by, or according to his understanding and judgment, so far as his duty is concerned. I say, so far as his duty is concerned, because if there are any instances or cases, in which the affections of the mind, or the motions of the body are uncontrollable by us, then in all those instances and cases, our duty is not concerned; that is, it is not our duty to controul them; and consequently, in every such instance and case, we are not accountable. But, in all other cases in which our duty is concerned, and for which we are accountable, it must be in the power of every individual (wherever he resides, or whatever disadvantageous circumstances he may be under) to direct and govern his affections and actions by, or according to his understanding
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and judgment, because otherwise he would not be an agent; and consequently, he would not be accountable. The major and minor propositions being proved, the conclusion naturally, necessarily and unavoidably follows; *viz.* that reason is, and must and will be to every man, if he be not wanting to himself, to every individual of our species who is answerable to God for his actions, under any or all the most disadvantageous circumstances he can possibly fall into, whether he resides in *China* or the *Cape of Good-Hope*, a sufficient guide in matters of religion. That is, reason when carefully used and followed, is to every individual of our species under all circumstances, if he be not wanting to himself, sufficient to guide him to God's favour; which is the point contended for.

Thus, I have shewn what those principles are, which I reason from; *viz.* that there is a natural and essential difference in things; that this difference exhibits a reason or rule of action, which is equally obliging to every moral agent; and that God will make this rule, the measure of his actions, in his dealings with his creatures. I have likewise shewn, what are the consequences, which do naturally and necessarily follow from those principles, *viz.* that God will deal with every accountable creature, according to the abilities he has, the circumstances

he is in, and the advantages or disadvantages he is under; and that every such creature, who exercises his reasoning capacity as well, or to answer the best purposes that he can, or that may reasonably be expected from him in his circumstances, and who directs and governs his affections and actions accordingly, will most certainly be approved and accepted of God. I say, that this will be the case; because, for God to do thus, will be to act a fair and an equal part by his creatures; and were he to do otherwise, would be to act unfairly and unequally by them. And, from the whole, I draw this final conclusion, *viz.* that reason is, and must, and will be to every individual of our species, who is answerable to God for his actions, to every one, if he be not wanting to himself, under any or all the most disadvantageous circumstances he can possibly fall into, a sufficient guide in matters of religion. I say, that this is, and must, and will be the case; because it is in the power, and it is left to the choice of every man, under all circumstances, to exercise his reasoning faculty, and to direct and govern his affections and actions as aforesaid.

The sum of this matter is this; if the principles I reason from are well-grounded, and if I have drawn just and true conclusions from those principles; then, I think,
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it must be allowed, that I have proved my point. And, on the other side, if it can be shewn, that the principles I reason from are false, or that I have drawn false conclusions from those principles; then, when that is done, I am answered; and all my reasoning upon the point, is of no weight. And here, my reader will see, that the case is brought to a very short issue, with respect to me; it is but to shew that the principles I reason from are false; or that I have drawn wrong conclusions from those principles; and then, I acknowledge myself answered: but then, any thing, and every thing short of this, will be short of an answer to me. Upon this issue then, I will leave the case, and likewise leave it to the world to judge, upon which side of the question the truth lies. However, that I may leave the case as free from incumbrances as I can, I shall make the following observations, *viz.*

First, When I say, that reason is, or may be, to every man who is not wanting to himself, a sufficient guide in matters of religion; I mean, that it is, or may be so to every individual of our species, who is *answerable to God for his actions*. For, if any of our species, thro' a defect in their constitutions, or thro' any disadvantageous circumstances they may be in, are incapable

of discerning the preferableness of one thing or action to another; or if their constitutions or circumstances are such, as render it unreasonable to expect that they should; to such persons, I do not say, that reason is a sufficient guide in matters of religion, or indeed any guide at all. But then, as these mens understandings cannot, or at least it is not reasonable to expect that they should, be of any advantage to them, as to the favour of God, and their souls happiness in another world: so on the other side, it is unreasonable to suppose that they will be any disadvantage to them in these respects; and if so, then such persons are not accountable, and will not be the subjects of a future judgment. The case is the same, with respect to any particular branch of duty. If thro' any defect in the constitution, or any bad circumstances a person may be in, he is rendered incapable of discerning the fitness or unfitness of this, or that action; or if it be unreasonable to expect that he should; then, under those circumstances, he is most certainly excusable; because the reason of the thing requires that he should be excused: and consequently, in these instances he is not accountable. As to those motives to action, arising from our future existence, and a future judgment, supposing these were not discoverable by our reasoning faculties, (which

(which I have shewn they are, and that the certainty of these points is founded in reason;) yet, reason would be a sufficient guide in matters of religion; because the reasonableness of an action, is a proper ground of action to a reasonable being, and ought to determine his will to the choice of that action, supposing no other motive intervened to invite him to it, and it ought to determine his will, in opposition to all temptations to the contrary; because the reasonableness of an action is more than a balance to all temptations. I say, this ought in reason to be the case; but whether it will be so in fact or not, depends upon the pleasure of each individual. And if the reasonableness of an action, be the sole ground and reason of a man's performing that action; then, in that instance, he will be highly pleasing and most acceptable to his maker; because in such a case, he acts from the best and most noble principle, even from that which is the sole ground and reason of action to God. Again,

Secondly, When I say, that reason is a sufficient guide in matters of religion, I do not intend by this to exclude the use of divine revelation. The use and design of a divine revelation, is to rouse up men from their sloth and security; to bring them to consideration and reflection; to assist their enquiries

enquiries, and to facilitate that work; to present to their view that rule of action, which the reason of things requires they should govern their behaviour by; to awaken in men a just sense of the trust that is reposed in them, and the obligations they are under both to God and to each other; to call those who live viciously, to repentance and reformation of their evil ways; and to represent to them the certain consequences of a good and a bad life, with regard to divine favour or displeasure; these and the like, are the gracious purposes which a divine revelation is intended to serve; and these are the manifest designs of the christian revelation. And when, such a divine revelation is given, it is a very great favour and advantage to those who enjoy it; But what has this to do with those who have it not? Are they to be considered as accountable creatures, and yet destitute of ability sufficient to render them pleasing to their maker? No, surely. The very supposition is monstrous, and carries with it a most horrid reflection upon the moral character of Almighty God.

Thirdly, When I say reason is a sufficient guide in matters of religion, I mean reason called into use and exercise, and not reason neglected or set aside in that respect. Reason, when it is rightly used, and duly applied,

plied, and when men direct and govern their affections and actions according to it, must needs be a sufficient guide in matters of religion, as I have shewn above. But, if a man does not carefully and duly exercise and apply his reasoning faculty to the subject of religion, but on the contrary neglects it, or sets it aside, and takes upon him to follow other guides, *viz.* the tradition of his fathers, the custom of the age and country in which he lives, and the like; then, and in that case, I am so far from affirming that reason is practically a sufficient guide in matters of religion, that on the contrary, I allow, that in fact, it may not be any guide at all. And, supposing this to be the case, with much the greater part, or even all our species, what is it to the purpose? Is reason the less a guide, or is it less sufficient to answer the purpose of a guide to mankind; because much the greater part, or even all our species does not, or will not make use of it, to answer that end? No, surely. A means, tho' never so well adapted to attain its end, is yet not proximately and practically sufficient to obtain that end, except it be properly and carefully used to answer that purpose. Suppose, for instance, that the christian revelation, when carefully attended to and followed, be excellently adapted

dapted to guide men to happiness : yet, it is not in fact sufficient for this purpose, except men attend to it, and make it a rule of action to themselves. And

Therefore, the distinction * which has been of late invented to perplex the case, viz. that reason is not proximately and practically a sufficient guide in matters of religion, to much the greater part of mankind ; and the author's argument founded on this distinction, which he is pleased to call an argument drawn from fact ; and his reasoning upon the point, which he calls reasoning from fact ; all this, is egregiously idle and trifling : because, it only serves to prove a point, which was never disputed ; and because, it leaves the question or point in debate, just as it found it. It is true, that reason has not in fact guided all our species to God's favour ; and therefore, it has not been proximately and practically sufficient for that purpose, to those who have not carefully used and followed it. But then, tho' this is true, yet it is beside the question ; because, notwithstanding this, reason may be practically sufficient, to those who carefully use and follow it, as aforesaid ; which is the point contended for.

* See a book entitled, the strength and weakness of human reason.

And,

And, as this author urges the necessity of a divine revelation, from reason's not being practically a sufficient guide in matters of religion, to the greatest part of those who are endowed with a reasoning faculty: so, his own argument, as much shews the necessity of some farther revelation to be given, which may be practically sufficient for this purpose, to those Christians, to whom the christian revelation has not been practically so, and which is much the greater part of them.

To this I may add, that the author I here refer to, takes care to give up the point, which he seems to contend against; *viz.* the sufficiency of reason. For, after he had racked his invention, to find out difficulties wherewith to perplex and distress the case, and after he had given a most sad account of the *Chinese*, (taken from *Jesuits* and *Popish* Missionaries, men of all others the least to be trusted,) he then observes, that those *Chinese*, can do much better than they do; and their not doing this, renders them greatly criminal, and justly condemnable in the sight of God. And from hence I argue, that if those *Chinese*, are greatly criminal, and justly condemnable in the sight of God, for their not doing what they can do; then, if they did do what they can do, they would by pari-

ty of reason, be greatly approvable, and justly rewardable in the sight of their maker. And consequently, reason would be, even to a *Chinese* in his present circumstances, if he were not wanting to himself, a sufficient guide in matters of religion. And thus, this author becomes his own answerer.

God has been pleased to place in, and to make it a part of the human constitution a reasoning faculty, to guide and direct our judgments, our affections, and actions, as well with respect to our future interest in another world, as to our present interest in this. And this faculty, when carefully used and followed, is, as it must needs be, to every individual of our species, under all circumstances, who are answerable to God for their actions, a sufficient guide in matters of religion. I say, this must needs be the case; because, this faculty was placed in us by our wise and kind Creator to answer this very purpose; and because, much the greater part of our species, have no other safe guide but this to be directed by; and because, if this were not the case, then those who have no other guide, would be very unfairly and unequally dealt with; which is a supposition that is not to be admitted. Every accountable creature, ought in reason, to be
furnished

furnished with ability to know and do what he is accountable for; that so, there may be just ground for approving or condemning him, according as he behaves himself: which, without he be furnished with such ability, there would not be any just ground for either. And, if his understanding should be unavoidably streightned, by any disadvantageous circumstances he may be placed in, so as to be unable to discover this or that important truth, or the fitness or unfitness of this or that action: then, in justice and equity, his duty must and will bear a proportion to the abilities he has, and the circumstances he is in, let that ability and those circumstances be what they will; and, if God be a righteous judge, which most certainly he is, then, he will take all these things into the account, and deal with every man accordingly. That is, he will deal with, and accept of every man, according to what he has, and not according to what he has not. God will not punish any of his creatures, for not knowing, what they in their circumstances cannot know; nor for not doing, what they cannot do: because, that would be, to act unrighteously by them. If any of our species are intrusted but with one talent, God will not account with him for five; and if any make the best use

they can of that one talent, or if they use it as well as in reason can be expected from them in their circumstances ; then, they will be approved and accepted of God. And the reason is evident, because in such a case, they are the proper objects of God's approbation and acceptance, and they are as much so, as the best Christian can be ; there being the same ground or reason, for God's approbation and acceptance of the one, as there is for the other ; seeing, each of them does his best, under his circumstances, and neither of them can do more ; and therefore, the having, or not having a divine revelation, makes no alteration in the case.

To conclude, I observe, that such is the degeneracy, and such are the unhappy circumstances of a great part of our species, as renders it highly expedient, and therefore, greatly desirable that a divine revelation should be given ; and consequently, it is exceedingly kind and good in God, that he has given a revelation to mankind. And, if this is all, that those who oppose the sufficiency of reason, intend by that opposition, then, I do not know that they have any opposers ; however, I assure them, they fight without an adversary with respect to me. But, if those men, who argue against the sufficiency

ciency of reason in matters of religion, intend (as I think they must) that men who are destitute of a divine revelation, and who honestly and carefully exercise their reasoning faculties, and direct and govern their affections and actions accordingly, or who do this, as well as may reasonably be expected from them in their respective circumstances; that then, it is exceeding difficult, yea, next to impossible, for such men to render themselves pleasing and acceptable to God; and consequently, it is exceeding difficult, and next to impossible, that reason, when carefully used and followed, should be proximately and practically a sufficient guide in matters of religion: this I disown, this I deny, upon the grounds before laid down. And here I beg my reader to remember, and this is what I would have upon his mind, *viz.* that the present question is, whether reason (where a divine revelation is not) when carefully used and followed, is sufficient to guide men to God's favour, and the happiness of another world, which are the great and main ends, we need desire it should be sufficient for. I say, the question is, whether reason be sufficient to answer these purposes, and not, whether it be sufficient to answer other purposes, which crafty men have introduced into the question, therewith to confuse

confuse and perplex it. Indeed, if all our species have, or have had, in all ages and countries, a divine revelation which is, and has been sufficient to answer the purposes aforesaid; then, this question is needless: but, I think, this pretence is so manifestly groundless and idle, that one would think a man must have more than common assurance to offer it to the world.

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